

They are Paul Moss and Edmund Vance who perished in separate mines in Boone County, WV.

While the names of these coal miners have become known to many of us, we must not forget that there are many more coal miners whose tragic deaths are not chronicled in the national media. They die quietly in their homes of black lung disease. They die anonymously in mine accidents across the Nation. Their families mourn, their families grieve their loss without national attention.

I pay tribute to all of those who have fallen in our Nation's mines and to their families who must bear their loss. A grateful Nation owes its eternal thanks.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I wish to associate myself with the remarks of my distinguished senior senator, Mr. BYRD, and rise to ask my colleagues to take up and adopt our resolution honoring miners in West Virginia and throughout this country who work hard in dangerous situations to provide energy this Nation needs.

The attention of the world was focused on small towns in my State of West Virginia in the first two months of 2006. When 12 miners were found to have died in the Sago Mine in Upshur County in early January, the hopes and prayers of a global television audience were dashed along with those living the tragedy in the Sago Baptist Church.

Americans and our friends around the world tuned in again when miners became trapped by a belt fire in the Alma Mine in Logan County later in January. I was sitting with the families of the trapped miners when they heard the news we were all dreading. It was a profoundly sad and moving moment, one I will never forget, and an experience which I cannot do justice to here.

When tragedy struck again at two mines in Boone County it was almost more than any of us could bear. After these accidents, the Governor of my State of West Virginia, Joe Manchin, who has been a stalwart throughout these trying times, called for a temporary stand-down in West Virginia mines to reinforce and reinvigorate mine safety procedures. I was pleased to see that the Mine Safety and Health Administration, MSHA, came into West Virginia in numbers to assist State officials, and later instituted a 1-hour safety refresher for all U.S. mines under its authority. In Pennsylvania, Governor Rendell emulated Governor Manchin in calling for renewed safety training for mines throughout the Commonwealth.

Mining, as we know, is an inherently dangerous profession, but it is a vital component in our Nation's economy. Without coal from Appalachia, the Illinois Basin, the Powder River Basin, and various other regions throughout the U.S., our economy shuts down. Coal provides more than half our electricity, and coal conversion technologies will soon allow America's most abundant

mineral resource to provide transportation fuels and chemical feedstocks as well. If the United States of America is ever going to lessen its dependence on foreign sources of energy, you can be sure that the miners will lead the way. These are men and women who do a job most Americans understand little about, and until tragedy periodically reminds the Nation, most Americans probably do not even think about. Coal production is increasing across the country and around the world. Coal is on the rise, and safety has to be, too.

Mine safety has been very much in the thoughts of every West Virginian these first two months of 2006. In 2005, West Virginia lost miners also, as did Alabama, Ohio, Wyoming, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky. Mr. President, 2006 has already seen mine fatalities in Kentucky and Utah. As these tragedies show, and as MSHA's nationwide action and Governor Rendell's actions in Pennsylvania suggest, mine safety is a national issue and improving it must be a national priority.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 370) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 370

Whereas coal generates more than half of domestic electricity, providing millions of Americans with energy for their homes and businesses;

Whereas West Virginia is the Nation's second largest coal producing State;

Whereas an average of 7,600 pounds of coal per person per year is used in the United States;

Whereas the United States has an estimated 275,000,000,000 tons of recoverable coal reserves representing about 95 percent of all fossil fuel reserves in the nation;

Whereas coal continues to be the economic engine for many communities;

Whereas coal miners are among the most productive of all American workers, producing 7 tons of coal per miner per day, which results in coal consistently being the most cost-effective choice for generating electricity in the United States;

Whereas during the last century over 100,000 coal miners have been killed in mining accidents in the Nation's coal mines;

Whereas the Nation is greatly indebted to coal miners for the difficult and dangerous work they perform to provide the fuel needed to operate the Nation's industries and to provide energy to homes and businesses;

Whereas 13 West Virginia miners were trapped 260 feet below the surface in the Sago mine for over 40 hours following an explosion on January 2, 2006;

Whereas Federal, State, and local rescue crews worked relentlessly in an attempt to save the miners;

Whereas many residents of Upshur County, West Virginia, and the surrounding areas came together at the Sago Baptist Church to support the miners' families;

Whereas 12 miners, Thomas Anderson, Alva Martin Bennett, Jim Bennett, Jerry Groves,

George Hamner Jr., Terry Helms, David Lewis, Martin Toler, Fred Ware Jr., Jack Weaver, Jesse Jones, and Marshall Winans, lost their lives on January 3, 2006;

Whereas only one miner, Randal McCloy, was safely rescued;

Whereas 2 West Virginia miners were trapped by a fire in the Aracoma Alma Mine on January 19, 2006;

Whereas Don Israel Bragg and Ellery "Elvis" Hatfield lost their lives in the Aracoma Alma Mine;

Whereas 2 West Virginia miners lost their lives in separate incidents in Boone County on February 1, 2006; and

Whereas Edmund Vance perished in the Long Branch No. 18 Mine and Paul Moss perished at the Elk Run Black Castle mine:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes Thomas Anderson, Alva Martin Bennett, Jim Bennett, Jerry Groves, George Hamner Jr., Terry Helms, David Lewis, Martin Toler, Fred Ware Jr., Jack Weaver, Jesse Jones, and Marshall Winans for their sacrifice in the Sago, West Virginia, coal mine;

(2) recognizes Don Israel Bragg and Ellery "Elvis" Hatfield for their sacrifice in the Aracoma Alma, West Virginia coal mine;

(3) extends the deepest condolences of the Nation to the families of these men;

(4) recognizes Edmund Vance and Paul Moss for their sacrifice in the Boone County, West Virginia coal mines;

(5) recognizes Randal McCloy for his stamina and courage that enabled him to survive in severe conditions for over 40 hours;

(6) recognizes the rescue crews for their outstanding effort resulting in the safe rescue of Randal McCloy; and

(7) recognizes the many volunteers who provided support for the miners' families during the rescue operations.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I have been stating that we have been prepared to consider some of the additional nominations that are on the Executive Calendar and are available for consideration. There are a number of nominations being held up for one reason or another. But I am particularly concerned that a group of nominations is being held up for reasons unrelated to their qualifications or job responsibilities. We have several senior Department of Defense nominations and intelligence nominations that we need to consider.

We will begin the amendment process to the asbestos bill beginning tomorrow morning, and my intention is to see if we can schedule debate and votes on these nominations. If we are unable to do that, then I will file a cloture motion on the nomination, with that vote occurring Friday.

NOMINATION OF ERIC S. EDELMAN TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, the Senate proceed to executive session and an immediate vote on the confirmation of Calendar No. 309, Eric S. Edelman to be Under Secretary of Defense, with no intervening action or debate.